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SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/53

Addendum

Profiles in displacement: Georgia*

* The executive summary of this mission report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself is contained in the annex to the executive summary and is being circulated in the language of submission and Russian only.

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Executive Summary

At the invitation of the Government of Georgia, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, Francis M. Deng, undertook an official mission to Georgia, from 13 to 17 May 2000.

The objectives of the mission were fourfold. First, and generally, to study first hand the situation of internal displacement in the country and the current conditions of the internally displaced. Second, to understand the constraints impeding durable solutions to the plight of the displaced seven to nine years after displacement occurred. Third, to explore through dialogue with the Government and other authorities, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, other relevant actors and internally displaced persons themselves the possibilities for overcoming these constraints. Finally, on the basis of the findings in these three areas to recommend measures towards ensuring more effective responses.

By way of conclusion, it can be said that the mission achieved its four stated objectives. The visits to collective centres where many of the displaced currently reside, as well as to the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from where they originate, proved particularly informative in meeting the first two objectives: to study the situation of internal displacement in Georgia and the current conditions of the internally displaced, and to understand the constraints impeding durable solutions to the displaced. It must be said that the findings of the mission challenge the impression frequently encountered in particular in the international community, that internally displaced persons in Georgia are a privileged group and thus that special programmes for them are unwarranted. To be sure, the population of Georgia as a whole faces socio-economic difficulties, but the displaced have additional disadvantages which need to be acknowledged and addressed. In protracted situations of displacement, the particular vulnerabilities of the displaced risk being forgotten. In Georgia, neither the vulnerabilities of the displaced nor the factors leaving them in conditions of vulnerability should continue to be overlooked. The third objective, of exploring through dialogue with the Government and other authorities, international agencies, NGOs, civil society and internally displaced persons themselves, possibilities for overcoming these constraints proved instrumental in meeting the fourth objective of formulating a number of recommendations towards ensuring more effective responses.

The Commission on Human Rights as well as the General Assembly have invited Governments of countries to which the Representative has undertaken an official mission to give due consideration to his recommendations and suggestions and to make available information on measures taken thereon. The Representative looks forward to further cooperation with all those involved in implementing the following recommendations, intended for the Government of Georgia, other authorities, the international community and local NGOs, towards enhancing response to the plight of Georgia's internally displaced persons.

(i) **Acknowledge the vulnerability and special needs of the internally displaced and their rights to protection, assistance, reintegration and development aid.** The findings of the Representative's mission challenge the prevailing impression that internally displaced persons in Georgia are a privileged group, by identifying

a number of particular problems and disadvantages that they face. International organizations, NGOs and government authorities should make known their special needs and take steps to address them.

(ii) **Disseminate and promote the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, especially in local languages.** Dissemination of the Principles to internally displaced persons is critical, as a means of countering the politically motivated misinformation concerning their rights that is being propagated. Translation of the Principles into local languages, in particular Abkhaz and Osset, would be important in this regard. The Principles also should be promoted among the authorities, agencies and NGOs and among local communities, so as to sensitize the population at large to the particular plight of internally displaced persons.

(iii) **The Government should design national policies and legislation, and international and local programmes in accordance with the Guiding Principles.** The Government's positive response to the Principles should be reflected in national legislation and policy. Among the initiatives which should facilitate this is the study of Georgian legislation relating to internally displaced persons to be undertaken by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, with the support of the Brookings Institution project on internal displacement and OSCE/ODIHR.

(iv) **The Government should ensure the full rights of internally displaced persons as citizens.** Though this recommendation is implicit in the previous recommendation, it merits express statement and the undertaking of specific measures, in particular with regard to equitable access to public services such as education and health, access to land, opportunities for income-generation and the right of internally displaced persons to participate fully in the civil and political decision-making processes that affect their lives. Legislation governing land ownership and entitlement to vote in elections needs to be revised so as to respect the rights of the internally displaced. The Government is encouraged to seek assistance from OHCHR, in the context of its technical cooperation and advisory services programme, to support initiatives to promote and protect the rights of internally displaced persons.

(v) **Improve the living conditions of displaced persons.** The Government, the international community and civil society should work together to improve the current living conditions of the displaced, especially those in collective centres. In particular, efforts should be made to encourage the relocation of internally displaced persons, especially those living in hospitals and dilapidated hotels, so that their lives and those of their children can be improved.

(vi) **The Government should ensure payment of the stipend to which internally displaced persons are entitled.** The 12 lari monthly stipend to which internally displaced persons are entitled is certainly not sufficient for their survival but it is

critical. Moreover, it is provided for by law. At the time of the mission, internally displaced persons had not received this stipend for six months.

(vii) **Support comprehensive and countrywide efforts to improve the current conditions of internally displaced persons.** Too much of the humanitarian focus is on certain groups and areas, to the neglect of others. Support programmes, such as the New Approach, should seek to become more comprehensive, encompassing internally displaced persons from the Georgian-Osset conflict, as well as those displaced by conflict in Abkhazia, and targeting rural as well as urban areas. In particular, they should be based on an objective assessment of vulnerability, and there should be rapid disbursement of funds from the international community and prompt implementation of projects to improve the lives of the displaced, especially in terms of their living conditions, opportunities for income-generation and access to land.

(viii) **Give special attention to the particular needs of women and women-headed households.** Skills training, business development and credit support initiatives targeting internally displaced women are required, as is strengthened support for organizations of internally displaced women. Towards ensuring that projects undertaken as part of the New Approach address the particular needs of women and women-headed households, as well as involve women in the planning and implementation, a gender component should be introduced as criteria for funding by the Georgia Self-Reliance Fund.

(ix) **Support programmes to address psychosocial needs.** The high incidence of mental health problems among the internally displaced and the impact that these have on the pursuit of possibilities to improve their living conditions and on the preservation of the family unit call for comprehensive programmes addressing psychosocial needs, and paying special attention paid to those of internally displaced children.

(x) **Uphold the right of internally displaced persons to return in safety and dignity.** The emphasis in the New Approach on improving the current conditions of internally displaced persons must in no way be misconstrued as abandoning the right to return, which is imprescriptible and must continue to be advocated and actively pursued by the Government, local NGOs and civil society, and the international community.

(xi) **End obstructions to the right to return in safety and dignity.** The national and de facto authorities must take concrete measures to ensure respect of this right and create the conditions for its realization. The Abkhaz authorities in particular are called upon to cease the laying of mines as a deterrent to return, to support de-mining efforts in areas of return, to make concerted efforts to establish law and order in areas of return and to revise, in accordance with international standards, the language of instruction policy in Georgian schools, which also works to obstruct return. Intensified human rights training of law enforcement officials, including on the rights of internally displaced persons, is required. The

Government of Georgia is called upon to ensure a fair and transparent process for property restitution or compensation and, together with the Government in Exile, to make concerted efforts to stem the incursion of armed partisan groups into the security zone established as part of the ceasefire agreement regarding the conflict in Abkhazia. The authorities in South Ossetia also are called upon to establish effective mechanisms of law and order and, in particular, to prevent ethnically motivated violence, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators when this does occur.

(xii) **Recognize the right of internally displaced persons to pursue alternatives to return, that is resettlement in another part of the country.** Given the politicization of the plight of internally displaced persons in Georgia, it is essential to ensure that the overriding emphasis on return, which indeed appears to be the preferred option of many of the displaced, does not come at the expense of alternative durable solutions, specifically resettlement, to which internally displaced persons are also entitled.

(xiii) **Support those supporting the displaced.** This support must take a number of forms. Host families who have generously taken in internally displaced persons but may also be suffering poor socio-economic conditions require support in shouldering this extra burden. Human rights and humanitarian personnel, local as well as international, must be able to operate with unrestricted access to populations in need and have their safety assured. Moreover, the important work of local NGOs with the internally displaced must be supported and strengthened, in particular outside of the capital and in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, especially as civil society is one of Georgia's greatest assets and NGOs can make an important contribution to depoliticizing the plight of the displaced. Special attention should be given to supporting the active involvement of local needs and civil society in the implementation of the New Approach.

(xiv) **Intensify efforts to resolve the conflicts.** While undertaking measures to improve the current conditions of the displaced, durable solutions to their plight of course require that the root causes of their displacement, which are inherently political in nature, be effectively addressed. Though conflict negotiation processes have been in place for both conflicts for several years now, there is a need for intensification by all parties of efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the conflicts causing displacement. The Government of the Russian Federation has a particularly important role to play in facilitating the resolution of both conflicts, especially that in Abkhazia.

(xv) **Advance planning for post-conflict reconstruction.** Following a peace agreement, a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programme that addresses the particular needs of returnees as well as of the local population will be required as an essential component of a durable peace. Advance planning for this by the Government and other authorities, in cooperation with the international community, is important for ensuring a smooth transition to peace, and to support the return and reintegration of displaced persons.

(xvi) **Support efforts promoting peaceful coexistence.** Even in the event of political agreements ending the conflicts, the legacy of bitterness left by the ethnic conflicts must also be addressed and overcome in order to ensure the safe and durable return and reintegration of displaced persons into their pre-war communities. A number of initiatives to this end have begun, but local NGOs, on both sides of the Abkhaz conflict in particular, noted the need for more concerted efforts to enable dialogue and establish other links between the civilian population caught up in the conflicts. The Government, de facto authorities and the international community should also invest in these grassroots peace-building initiatives.

Annex

Profiles in displacement: Georgia

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Appendix. Map of Georgia and region

Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of Georgia, the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Francis M. Deng, undertook an official mission to Georgia, from 13 to 17 May 2000. The Representative was accompanied by the human rights officer servicing his mandate in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ms. Erin Mooney. The delegation also included an associate humanitarian affairs officer of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Ms. Allegra Baiocchi, who provided assistance during the mission.

2. The objectives of the mission were fourfold. First, and generally, to study first-hand the situation of internal displacement in the country and the current conditions of the internally displaced. Second, to understand the constraints impeding durable solutions to the plight of the displaced seven to nine years after displacement occurred. Third, to explore through dialogue with the Government and other authorities, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, other relevant actors and internally displaced persons themselves the possibilities for overcoming these constraints. Finally, on the basis of the findings in these three areas, to recommend measures towards ensuring more effective responses.

3. In Tbilisi, the Representative was received by His Excellency President Eduard Shevardnadze, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Refugees and Accommodation, the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the Chairman of the Abkhaz Government in Exile. He also met with representatives of United Nations and other international humanitarian, human rights and development agencies, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of civil society, and representatives of the donor and diplomatic community, including the group of countries (France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States) comprising the "Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia".

4. The programme included field visits to Tskhinvali, Tskhaltubo, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Tsaishi, Ingiri and Sukhumi, in the course of which meetings were held with local authorities, international agencies, NGOs, representatives of civil society and internally displaced persons, including women's groups. In Tskhinvali and Sukhumi, the Representative met with the de facto authorities of these regions and, in Sukhumi, also with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

5. In his dialogue in these various meetings, the Representative made use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2). The Guiding Principles, it should be recalled, set out the rights of internally displaced persons in all phases of displacement - providing for protection from arbitrary displacement, protection and assistance during displacement and for safe and dignified return or resettlement and reintegration. Presented to the Commission on Human Rights in 1998, the Principles have since gained significant international standing and authority and are being widely disseminated and used in regions throughout the world. The Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly have welcomed the fact

that the Representative makes use of the Principles in his dialogue with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and have requested him to continue efforts in this regard.

6. In Georgia, the Guiding Principles have been received most positively and are actively being promoted as a useful tool for protecting the rights of the internally displaced. The Representative was pleased to find that the Principles were well known among government officials, local NGOs and representatives of the international community and broadly accepted as a useful basis for dialogue about the situation of the internally displaced in Georgia. The Minister for Foreign Affairs suggested that the Guiding Principles "should acquire, step by step, an obligatory character".

7. The Guiding Principles have been translated into the Georgian language by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and published by OCHA in the form of a booklet that is being disseminated throughout the country. During the Representative's mission, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, agreed to facilitate the translation of the Principles into the Abkhaz language as well, in the context of its programme for translating and disseminating international human rights standards and principles.

8. The mission of the Representative followed his participation in a workshop on internal displacement in the South Caucasus, held in Tbilisi from 10 to 12 May. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement (of which the Representative is Co-Director) and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Representatives of the Governments of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and representatives of international organizations and international and local NGOs involved with the problem of internal displacement in Georgia were among the participants. Workshop participants welcomed the Guiding Principles as a useful restatement of hard international law, as well as an instrument providing clear guidance in cases where existing international law contains grey areas. The summary report of the workshop is reproduced in document E/CN.4/2001/5/Add.2.

9. The Representative expresses his appreciation to the Government of Georgia for having invited him to undertake a visit and to the various government officials and other authorities, as well as representatives of international agencies, NGOs and members of the diplomatic community, who met with the mission delegation and shared their insight into the situation. He is particularly grateful to the office of the United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and to the OCHA office in Georgia for their assistance in organizing and participating actively in the programme of the mission.

10. This report is divided into six sections. By way of background, the first section provides a brief overview of the situation of internal displacement in the country. Section II sketches the current situation of the displaced. Section III explores the possibilities at present for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced, identifying the obstacles needing to be overcome. Section IV examines the recent significant shift in the national and international approach towards improving the current conditions of internally displaced persons in a way that

should better prepare them for durable solutions to their plight. Following a brief conclusion in section V, section VI enumerates a series of recommendations for enhancing national, local and international responses to the problem of internal displacement in Georgia.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE DISPLACEMENT SITUATION

11. According to government as well as NGO figures, there are in Georgia today some 280,000 internally displaced persons who have been uprooted as a result of armed conflict,[1] out of a population of just over 5 million. This displacement is actually the result of two separate armed conflicts in different regions of the country: in Abkhazia and in South Ossetia (also referred to as Tskhinvali region). The overwhelming majority of these internally displaced persons, some 266,000, are ethnic Georgians from Abkhazia, while the remainder were displaced by the conflict in South Ossetia.

12. In addition, the Government reports that some 20,000 persons were internally displaced as a result of natural disasters, in particular floods, earthquake and landslides, which occurred in the Svanetia and Ajara regions between 1987 and 1989.[2] Though little mention was made during the mission of this group of internally displaced persons, their plight was highlighted by the President and by the Minister for Refugees and Accommodation, who both called for international assistance in providing shelter assistance required to facilitate durable solutions.

13. The focus of the mission, not only for the Representative but also his various interlocutors, was on the conflict-induced displaced. For each of the two separate displacement crises due to conflict, a brief historical account as well as an overview of the current situation follows.

A. Conflict in Abkhazia

14. As noted above, the majority (some 266,000 persons) of the internally displaced in Georgia are ethnic Georgians from the region of Abkhazia (see annexed map). In 1931, Abkhazia was accorded the status of an autonomous republic within the Socialist Republic of Georgia and thereafter large numbers of non-Abkhaz, especially ethnic Georgians, migrated into the region. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent independence of Georgia was accompanied by growing political tensions and the rise of nationalist feeling among ethnic Georgians and Abkhazians. In August 1992, when conflict broke out, at issue were the attempts by the Abkhazian parliament to win increased political and cultural autonomy from Georgia; indeed, the Akbhaz leadership has since declared Abkhazia an independent state. The parties to the conflict comprise, on the one hand, troops from the central Government, paramilitaries and volunteers and, on the other, Abkhazian irregular forces, volunteers and mercenaries, with assistance from the Russian military.[3]

15. Demographic concerns have been central to the conflict and the main determinant of the pattern of displacement, which occurred along ethnic lines and induced the displacement of virtually the entire ethnic Georgian population from Abkhazia. Prior to the conflict, ethnic Georgians constituted approximately 46 per cent of the population of Abkhazia, compared with 17 per cent ethnic Abkhaz. About one third of the internally displaced originate from the Gali district in the southern part of Abkhazia (separated from Georgia proper by the Inguri river),

where ethnic Georgians constituted more than 85 per cent of the pre-war population. The first few years of the conflict, between 1992 and 1994, resulted in the displacement from Abkhazia of some 300,000 persons. Overwhelmingly, these were ethnic Georgians, though several thousand persons belonging to other ethnic groups, in particular Jews, Ukrainians, Greeks, Abkhaz, Armenians and Russians, also were displaced. Serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, looting, burning of homes and apartments, expulsions and forced evictions, carried out predominantly along ethnic lines, characterized this displacement and each party to the conflict has accused the other of carrying out "ethnic cleansing" in the areas under its control.[4] The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) repeatedly has condemned the displacement as 'ethnic cleansing' resulting in mass destruction and forcible expulsion of the predominantly Georgian population in Abkhazia, Georgia".[5] The dramatic demographic shift in favour of the Abkhaz occasioned by the displacement of the ethnic Georgian population has been a major determinant in the Abkhaz authorities' resistance to the return of displaced Georgians in any significant number.

16. Though a ceasefire, which largely runs along the Inguri river, has been in effect since May 1994, the conflict remains without a political solution. Nonetheless, in the years following the cease-fire some 50,000 to 70,000 displaced ethnic Georgians returned to Abkhazia, predominantly to the Gali district. Though a 1994 agreement between the parties to the conflict provided for organized return under the auspices of UNHCR,[6] a number of its provisions proved problematic, in particular the screening process imposed by the Abkhaz authorities.[7] As a result, most returns occurred outside of the organized process. In either case, the displaced returned to difficult and insecure conditions, finding their homes and property destroyed or seriously damaged and themselves subject to not infrequent harassment, intimidation and threats to their physical security from Abkhaz militia. In a particularly grave incident, in mid-March 1995, some 200 Georgian returnees in the Gali district were arrested by Abkhaz militia and a further 20, mostly men of military age, were murdered.[8]

17. In May 1998, the prevailing instability in Gali erupted into open conflict between Abkhaz forces and Georgian armed groups. Abkhaz militia swept through southern Gali on a path of destruction: systematically torching villages, destroying an estimated 1,400 homes, looting, killing livestock, destroying infrastructure and displacing anew almost all of the Georgian returnees, as well as several thousand people, mostly elderly, who had remained behind during the first phase of the conflict.[9] Some 40,000 people were displaced in a mere matter of days. Indeed, displacement appears to have been the very aim; the Security Council condemned inter alia "the deliberate destruction of houses by Abkhaz forces, with the apparent motive of expelling people from their home areas".[10]

18. Since that time no large-scale return has occurred. A number of displaced persons staying in close proximity to Abkhazia do travel back and forth from Georgia proper to southern Gali, especially during the cultivating and harvest seasons. However, large-scale durable return has not taken place owing to the situation of ongoing insecurity and the continued absence of a settlement to the conflict.

19. A particular aspect of the displacement crisis that requires mention is that the political representatives of ethnic Georgians in the Abkhaz Parliament, who were displaced from

Abkhazia along with the ethnic Georgian population as a whole, reconstituted themselves upon displacement to Georgia proper as the Abkhaz Government in Exile. The mandate of this group of politicians, who were last elected in 1991, continues to be recognized by the Government of Georgia, from which they receive funds that have been used to establish parallel structures and services, ranging from health to education to cultural programmes, for the displaced, as well as to maintain considerable defence capabilities.

B. Georgian-Osset conflict

20. The displacement crisis in Abkhazia was preceded by another situation of displacement, connected to the armed conflict in South Ossetia, a formerly autonomous region in the north-central part of Georgia. The conflict, which subsequently spread throughout Georgia proper, was characterized by ethnically-targeted violations of human rights and international humanitarian law[11] and, at its height in 1991 and 1992, displaced an estimated 60,000 individuals. Of these displaced persons, about 10,000 were ethnic Georgians, who mostly fled from South Ossetia to government-controlled parts of Georgia. The remaining 50,000 displaced persons were ethnic Ossets from South Ossetia as well as from Georgia proper. Of these, an estimated 5,000 fled within South Ossetia and were joined there by a further 5,000 ethnic Ossets from Georgia proper, to give a total of 10,000 internally displaced Ossets and 20,000 internally displaced persons overall. The remainder, that is some 40,000 Ossets, fled from South Ossetia (about 10,000) and from Georgia proper (about 30,000) to the Republic of North Ossetia in the Russian Federation, becoming refugees. This influx into North Ossetia was, in turn, a contributing factor to an internal displacement crisis in the Russian Federation, specifically of ethnic Ingush displaced from the Prigorodnyi region of North Ossetia to the neighbouring Republic of Ingushetia.[12]

21. It should be noted that figures for displacement associated with the Georgian-Osset conflict are estimates on account of the fact that there has never been an effective registration of the displaced. Today, estimates of the remaining internally displaced and refugee population remain vague, with conflicting figures offered by both sides. UNHCR estimates that there remain roughly 6,000 out of the 10,000 ethnic Georgian internally displaced persons in Georgia proper; 1,000 out of the 10,000 ethnic Osset internally displaced persons in South Ossetia; and 23,500 Osset refugees in North Ossetia and the North Caucasus.

II. CURRENT SITUATION OF THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED

22. Of the current internally displaced population in Georgia, an estimated 55 per cent are women, 36 per cent are children and 11.5 per cent are more than 63 years of age.

23. Regarding their location, approximately 42 per cent of the internally displaced live in the Samegrelo region contiguous with Abkhazia, across the Inguri river. Other large concentrations are in the capital city Tbilisi, where about a third of the internally displaced - some 88,000 persons - live, and Imereti, where approximately 13 per cent reside. The remainder of the displaced are in various other locations, including in South Ossetia.[13]

24. Though the missions undertaken by the Representative do not allow and are not designed for a comprehensive country-wide survey of the conditions of the internally displaced, from the

information collected, consultations held, and field visits undertaken it is possible to sketch a general picture of conditions of the internally displaced which points to concerns in a number of areas.

A. Shelter

25. As is often the case, in the initial period of displacement, large numbers of displaced people found emergency shelter in public buildings such as schools. Seven to nine years on, however, approximately 40 per cent of the displaced, numbering some 112,000 persons, remain in collective centres (defined as residences accommodating 10 or more internally displaced persons). Following efforts undertaken several years ago to move the displaced out of schools, with a view both to providing more suitable accommodation and to ending the disruption this created for the educational system, the collective centres in which the internally displaced currently reside consist mostly of former hotels, sanatoriums and hospitals. The Representative was informed of one case of 100 families living in a former factory. The mission visited collective centres in Tshkinvali (South Ossetia) and in Tskhaltubo and Ingiri, where internally displaced persons have been living for some seven to nine years.

26. Sixty per cent of internally displaced persons live in private accommodation. Though some internally displaced persons have the financial means to establish themselves independently, most of those in private accommodation are staying with host families, who frequently are relatives or former acquaintances. The continued hospitality of host families is noteworthy, especially given the difficult economic conditions facing the population of Georgia as a whole. This generosity, however, is beginning to show signs of strain: reportedly, the eviction of internally displaced persons from host families is occurring. This suggests the need to ensure that host families receive support in shouldering the added burden of having taken internally displaced persons into their homes, several years ago now.

27. Although the mission did not visit internally displaced persons residing in private accommodation, where of course the conditions would vary depending on the situation of the host family, the prevailing view is that they are in a better situation than those in collective centres, where conditions are considered to be much worse. A survey comparing the shelter conditions of internally displaced persons in private accommodation versus those in collective centres was being undertaken in 2000.

28. A number of problems were common to the various collective centres visited by the mission. These problems largely stem from the fact that the buildings serving as collective centres were never designed for communal living. Even in hotels or sanatoriums, the rooms where entire families now live were intended for the temporary stay of one or two people. Conditions are cramped and overcrowded: on average, the general population has almost five times more living space than internally displaced persons living in collective centres.[14] In hospitals, internally displaced families are crowded into empty rooms, surrounded by sick people in adjacent rooms.

29. In terms of structural conditions, a 1999 survey of 757 collective centres throughout Georgia, except Abkhazia and South Ossetia, classified approximately half of the buildings as being in very poor or poor condition and a third as being in need of minor repair.[15] Roofing,

sewerage and glazing were determined as being in urgent need of repair in order to winterize the shelters and contain disease. Electrical systems also were highlighted as a priority for repair. Water systems, not designed with a capacity for the number of people now using them, have been strained and also require repair. Former hotels housing the displaced have largely been gutted of their facilities and furniture.

30. Conditions in rural areas were reported to be even worse than in the towns and cities. The Representative was told of one case of 100 families living in a former gravel factory in very dusty conditions and with no windows. Furthermore, it was noted that this example was illustrative of conditions in outlying regions, to which, apparently, little attention and assistance had been devoted.

31. As to how to address these conditions, internally displaced persons often pointed out to the Representative that they would be prepared to undertake the repair work themselves, if only they could be provided with the material and tools required. Some assistance had begun to be provided to improve basic services. For instance, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) had a programme to improve sanitary facilities, but significant work still needs to be done for the collective centres to approach adequate shelter conditions.

32. Given these inadequate conditions, the question inevitably arises of relocating the displaced to alternative, more appropriate, accommodation. The reaction of internally displaced persons from Abkhazia to this proposition was most revealing. Consistently, they replied without hesitation that they would prefer to remain where they were, until such time as they could return home. It thus became apparent that the displaced were fearful that moving to alternative, more comfortable accommodation would somehow undermine their ultimate aim of return. This apprehension is deep-seated, apparently having emerged as a problem early into the displacement crisis, when efforts were being undertaken to move internally displaced persons out of local schools with a view both to improving their shelter conditions and enabling educational services to resume. For the displaced, who held fast to the hope of returning within a matter of days or weeks, the move to alternative accommodation gave a certain permanence to their situation that proved very difficult to accept.

33. To be sure, as indicated by the comments of the displaced in collective centres, there is clear interest in effecting improvements to their current living conditions. Yet, an immense psychological barrier clearly stands in the way of doing so by means of relocation to alternative accommodation. It was suggested by some observers that this apprehension could in part be attributed to outside influence, coming from representatives of political groups, themselves displaced, who are bent on the return of the displaced and on the regaining of territory over which control was lost during the conflict. Indeed, this could help explain the consistency of the response among various groups of displaced persons, and the categorical manner in which it was so quickly offered. The pressure that these political forces exert extends also to the central Government, having an influence on its policies for responding to the plight of the displaced.

B. Self-sufficiency, employment and income-generation

34. Given the protracted nature of the displacement situations in Georgia and the absence of concrete solutions to the conflicts causing them, so-called "donor fatigue" has set in, with the

result that international funding for basic humanitarian assistance programmes providing such essentials as food is being phased out. Meanwhile, though all internally displaced persons are supposed to receive a monthly stipend of 12 Georgian lari (approximately 5 United States dollars), even government officials acknowledged that it is not regularly paid. Indeed, at the time of the mission, in May 2000, internally displaced persons had not received a stipend since December 1999. In the month following the mission, displaced persons staged a series of demonstrations demanding payment of this allowance, some of which were dispersed by force.[16] Even when the stipend is paid, there is a need to supplement it with other sources of income simply in order to survive and approach the absolute poverty line of 52 lari per adult per month that has been set by the World Bank and below which 11 per cent of the population of Georgia fall. The "minimum survival" food basket alone costs 40 lari a month per adult.[17] Under these circumstances, the onus increasingly is on internally displaced persons to provide for themselves. And yet, there are significant constraints on the ability to do so, often as a result of government policies.

35. To be sure, the difficult economic conditions in the country, in large part associated with the sudden transition towards a market economy and the disruption of this process by conflict, mean that employment and income-generating opportunities remain rather limited. This is true for the general population as well as the internally displaced. Indeed, a Save the Children Fund (SCF) survey found that the internally displaced and the general population reported an approximately equal amount of median monetized income during the survey period (January 2000). However, the general population reported considerably higher levels of non-monetized sources of income than the internally displaced.

36. Access to land is the primary determinant of this discrepancy. The World Bank, in a report on poverty and income distribution in Georgia, singled out land ownership as the most important factor affecting poverty in rural areas, noting that "landless households have a higher poverty risk and depth of poverty than households who own more than one hectare".[18] Under Georgian law, however, an internally displaced person is not entitled to own land without registering as a permanent resident in the place of refuge and potentially (the law is not clear on this) losing the status of internally displaced person and the benefits that this entails.[19] Internally displaced persons reportedly fear that they would then lose their right to return. This fear is of course unfounded, for as citizens they would retain their right to freedom of movement and choice of residence. It was suggested that this mistaken assumption may have been cultivated by elements of the political leadership that are bent on return and concerned that ties to the land will literally ground the displaced in their present location and diminish their interest in return. For these reasons, those internally displaced persons who have the means to purchase land or residential property reportedly tend to do so secretly, outside of the normal legal processes.

37. As many displaced nonetheless still lack the financial means to purchase land, they should at least be given the opportunity to lease or otherwise have access to plots of land. According to the Law on Internally Displaced Persons, local authorities are obliged to provide internally displaced persons with plots of land for temporary use. Some regional authorities affirmed that they had indeed provided displaced persons with the possibility of using plots of land on a temporary basis. However, internally displaced persons have pointed to problems of

corruption, noting that if they did not pay "extra expenses" when requesting plots of land, they either did not receive it or received land of such poor quality and so far from their accommodation that it would not be worthwhile to use it.[20]

38. Working on the land is where the skills of many of the internally displaced lie, as large numbers of them were engaged in agricultural activity prior to their displacement. Resuming such activity would enable internally displaced persons to grow food to feed their families and, with any surplus, to generate income to meet other needs and generally improve the economic situation of the household.

39. As with the issue of access to land, the World Bank has found that ownership of livestock reduces the risk of poverty in a rural household.[21] By livestock is meant a range of different types of animals, such as pigs, cows and chickens. A recent survey by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) found that whereas 47 per cent of local households owned livestock, for internally displaced persons this figure was only 9 per cent. When calculated in terms of an odds ratio, local households were almost nine times more likely than internally displaced persons to own livestock.[22]

40. Given their limited access to land and low rate of livestock ownership, internally displaced persons must concentrate their use of these assets on simply meeting their subsistence needs. All those internally displaced persons surveyed who own livestock or have some access to land reported using it entirely for their own household consumption.[23] Support clearly is needed not only for ensuring food security but also creating income-generating opportunities from agricultural production.

41. The agricultural cooperative programme run by Action Against Hunger (AAH) provides a good example of how to do so. In the village of Tsaishi, outside of Zugdidi, the mission had the opportunity to visit two of eight cooperatives sponsored by AAH in the Samegrelo region. The cooperatives have a membership of 800 persons (100 in each), of whom 60 per cent are internally displaced persons and 40 per cent are members of the local population, all selected on the basis of vulnerability. In order to provide support to women heads of household in particular, women are to comprise a minimum of 25 per cent of the beneficiaries. The objectives of the programme are to provide food security by ensuring the availability of staple food for the beneficiaries and, once this goal is met, to support income-generating agricultural activities through the sale of surplus production from farming and animal husbandry. Financial and material support provided by AAH is progressively to be reduced, while the contribution of the beneficiaries is to increase, with a view to reaching full sustainability by the end of the third year. State land is leased from the local authorities by AAH which, though paying for the lease in the first year, expects participants to do so beginning in the second year, using profits made from production in the first. Another aim of the programme, thus, is to facilitate the beneficiaries' legal access to land, through AAH transferring to them responsibility for the lease, which is for a period of five years.

42. Notwithstanding this time frame, AAH noted that most of the internally displaced persons participating in the programme still plan to return home. Indeed this intention was expressly stated by the internally displaced with whom the delegation met at the cooperative sites. It thus appears that when it comes to issues of self-sufficiency and income-generation,

there is not the psychological barrier that arises when relocation out of collective centres (where most of the cooperative participants live) is discussed. People appear to have a longer-term vision or perhaps have come to grips with the reality of not being able to return safely in the immediate future and the need to lead productive lives in the interim.

43. The AAH cooperative programme clearly is working to the benefit of the internally displaced and could advantageously be expanded and replicated. It was thus a matter of concern that, at the time of the mission, funding for the AAH programme from the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) was expected to be dramatically decreased. This programme and others like it merit strong support. They are critical to bridging the "relief to development gap" and enabling the displaced and others who have been dependent on humanitarian assistance for several years to resume productive lives.

44. In addition to limited access to land and ownership of livestock, the IFRC survey also found that local households were five times more likely than internally displaced persons to own a car, van or truck. As the IFRC point out, this is an important difference as a car, van or truck can be put to productive use and thus become a source of income.[24]

45. As to employment opportunities for the displaced, these are constrained by the general economic situation of the country as a whole: national unemployment stands at a rate of 26 per cent. Even so, it was pointed out that internally displaced persons could benefit from skills training as well as training to familiarize them with new employment practices that have been introduced with the shift to a market economy – a transition which has largely occurred during their period of displacement and unemployment. The food-for-work programmes operated by the World Food Programme provide a means both for meeting food needs and re-engaging displaced persons in productive employment. Another important initiative is the vocational training programme run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Zugdidi, which the Representative visited. The programme provides training in languages, computer skills and trades such as carpentry. Furthermore, once participants have completed the training, they are assisted in making contacts with prospective employers.

46. In some cases, employers may be internally displaced persons themselves. For instance, the mission visited a tea enterprise owned by an internally displaced person who had relocated his business from Sukhumi, Abkhazia, to Tskhaltubo in Imereti region. Special efforts were made by the owner to hire internally displaced persons, who accounted for 80 per cent of the workforce in the factory and 50 per cent of field labourers. Moreover, they were provided with bus transportation from the communal centres, which were some distance away, to and from the enterprise.

47. New business development also is needed. Important support for this purpose is provided by the business incubator programme run by the IRC in Zugdidi, alongside the IRC vocational training programme noted above. The programme provides physical space for fostering small business, with a resource centre and access to business services, expertise and advice, as well as a credit programme. Though neither the business incubator nor the training programme is specifically targeted to internally displaced persons, they are actively encouraged to participate and information about the programme is disseminated in the collective centres. In addition, among the criteria for businesses to be accepted into the programme is a commitment

to hire a certain percentage of internally displaced persons. Another component of the programme is a micro-credit scheme, of which internally displaced persons constitute an estimated 65 per cent of the beneficiaries.

48. Ensuring that small business development support and micro-credit opportunities reach internally displaced women, as well as men, is essential. In the absence of such alternatives, the problem of young women turning to prostitution to earn sufficient income to move out of the collective centres was noted. Both in Tbilisi and in the regions, the delegation met with members of women's organizations active in promoting business opportunities for internally displaced women. For example, small business development is one focus of activities of the NGO "Sokhumi", formed in 1997 by and for professional internally displaced women, which now has a membership of over 100. Such women's organizations and their goals - skills training, business development and credit support for women - merit strong support.

C. Health and medical care

49. In the area of health also, internally displaced persons, in common with the local population, face a number of problems in terms of ailments and of access to health services. Iodine deficiency disorders, for instance, are a common problem throughout Georgia and, indeed, much of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). A 1996 survey of 30,000 schoolchildren, commissioned by UNICEF found iodine deficiency in 64 per cent of the surveyed population.[25] Severe iodine deficiency in utero causes severe mental retardation or cretinism. Consumption of iodized salt is considered the most effective way of ensuring an adequate intake of iodine. Yet an IFRC survey found that most households, internally displaced and local alike, used salt that either was not iodized or contained an inadequate quantity of iodine.[26]

50. However, in addition to sharing many health problems common to the general population, internally displaced persons are also more susceptible to certain types of problems resulting from their displacement and the circumstances leading to it. Most notably, the Save the Children Fund Survey found that physical disability was more prevalent in internally displaced persons' households than in the local population.[27] Injuries suffered during conflict and flight provide a partial explanation for this discrepancy. But the survey also suggests that little or no access to health-care services during the conflict and soon afterward, low household income to pay for health care, medicines and treatment, and poor living conditions also are factors which have resulted in a higher rate of physical limitation among internally displaced children.

51. Regarding nutritional status, a 1998 IFRC survey of internally displaced children in western Georgia found that, although the prevalence of acute malnutrition was low, there was a high rate of chronic malnutrition, manifested by stunted growth.[28] A diet of poor quality, that is one particularly low in biological protein and micronutrients even though it may have an adequate energy content, accounts for these results.

52. With respect to access to health services, surveys by the Government and international NGOs have shown that a low percentage of internally displaced persons and of locals report receiving medical treatment for illness or disability, even when their condition is serious, the main reason being cost.[29] Although health care is supposed to be provided free of charge to all

citizens, in practice payment is required. In part, payment is required because the doctors and nurses frequently do not receive their full salary from the State. The issue of free access to health care thus is closely linked to the budgetary problems faced by the central Government.

53. In some regions, health clinics specifically for the internally displaced have been established as part of a larger programme of parallel public services offered by the Government in Exile, using funds channelled to it from the central Government. The extent to which such parallel structures impede internally displaced persons from having access to the regular system of public services appeared, from the answers of the displaced, to vary. For the most part, such impediments appeared to derive not so much from institutionalized discrimination - the law recognizes the equality of all citizens to have access to the health services for instance - as from the practical problems of physical proximity to the public services and the ability to pay for them. In some cases, it was suggested that the health clinics set up specifically for the displaced provided them with better services, in particular as they were free of charge, than were available to the local population.

54. In the critical area of reproductive health, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is working with the Ministry of Health, local NGOs and international agencies to ensure that internally displaced persons, together with the general population, have access to reproductive health information and services. Of the 55 regional reproductive health/family planning centres and units established in Georgia since 1996, 21 are in areas of high concentrations of internally displaced persons, from both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Contraceptives and reproductive health counselling is provided free of charge through these centres. In late 1999 and early 2000, a reproductive health survey was conducted among 7,500 women in Georgia, including more than 1,800 internally displaced women in collective centres, to assess levels of fertility, abortion, contraception usage, sexually transmitted disease and domestic violence, and study the factors that affect them. In measuring these indices, separate tabulations were to be prepared for internally displaced women, comparing results with the local population in different regions of Georgia. The report of the survey, which was scheduled to be finalized by the end of 2000, should provide the basis for future programming.

D. Education

55. In Georgia, the first nine grades of education are compulsory and free. For higher grades, fees of between 10 and 15 lari a month are required of about 70 per cent of students, while the remainder, selected on the basis of merit, are exempt from fees. As with public services, the extent to which internally displaced children and adolescents attend public schools versus those established by the Government in Exile appeared to vary, with most internally displaced persons queried replying that their children were not prevented from attending public schools. Where the opposite is true, UNICEF informed the delegation that it was working with the authorities to promote an inclusive education system enabling the integration of internally displaced children into the normal education system.

56. However, lack of school supplies, proper clothing and shoes were cited as factors leading to internally displaced children and adolescents failing to attend school. According to a resident of one collective centre visited, these factors accounted for reportedly only half of

the 400 internally displaced children living there attending school regularly. As education is so essential to a child's, and indeed a country's, development, support must be provided to ensure that children receive the basic supplies required to attend school.

57. Absenteeism was also attributed to the fact that increasing numbers of internally displaced children have to resort to begging and even criminality in order to assist their families to survive. Supporting income-generating activities for their parents is thus also essential for ensuring education and enhanced future economic prospects for children.

58. For internally displaced persons from Abkhazia, education is a particularly important issue needing to be addressed as one of the pre-requisites for return (see paras. 80-81 below).

E. Political participation

59. The right to political participation is one area where internally displaced persons, regardless of place of residence and economic means, most definitely are disadvantaged compared with the rest of the population. This discrimination, moreover, is sanctioned by law.

60. The Parliament of Georgia is elected by a mixed election system whereby 150 seats are allocated proportionally through nationwide party lists and the remaining 85 seats through single seat constituencies on the basis of free, universal and direct suffrage. The Election Law of 1995 provides, in article 33 (1), concerning the compilation of voters lists, that "[f]orcefully displaced persons shall be included in the voter's lists according to their present places of residence. A separate list shall be compiled for displaced persons and they shall not participate in the majority elections held in single-mandate districts". In practice, this provision has been interpreted to mean that internally displaced persons are permitted to vote only for the nationwide list, but not for the representative to Parliament of the district in which they are currently residing. In this latter connection, provision is instead made to extend the mandate of the eight deputies from Abkhazia (who came to office in 1991) until such time that elections can be held there, that is, only after large-scale and durable return of the displaced. The two parliamentary seats for South Ossetia remain vacant.[30]

61. Internally displaced persons are similarly denied the right to vote in the municipal elections in the district where they are currently residing - an issue that the OHCHR has raised with the Government of Georgia, beginning in 1998.

62. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement clearly affirm the right of internally displaced persons to political participation. Guiding Principle 22.1 (d) provides that "[i]nternally displaced persons ... shall not be discriminated against as a result of their displacement in the enjoyment of ... the right to vote and to participate in governmental and public affairs, including the right to have access to the means necessary to exercise this right". In addition, this principle should be read in conjunction with Principle 1.1, which affirms that "internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the grounds that they are internally displaced".

63. As the Guiding Principles are a restatement of existing international law, the main international legal provisions that Principle 22.1 (d) reflects are of course relevant. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides, in article 25, that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to participate in the conduct of public affairs and to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections. Furthermore, it requires that this right be guaranteed without unreasonable restrictions and without any of the distinctions enumerated in article 2 of the Covenant, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In reference to this provision, the situation of being internally displaced is deemed to not be a justifiable distinction on the basis of which to restrict or deny the exercise of human rights.[31] Pursuant to article 5 (c) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States parties undertake to guarantee the right of everyone to equality in the enjoyment of the right to political participation, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin. And at the regional level, article 3 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights requires that States parties "undertake to hold free elections ... under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature".

64. The provisions of the Georgian Election Law prohibiting internally displaced persons from full enjoyment of their right to vote on an equal basis with other citizens thus do not appear to comply with international and regional human rights standards. Indeed, senior government officials at the national and regional levels, with whom the Representative raised this point, acknowledged that the Government position on the issue of political participation for the internally displaced may be flawed. Appropriate revisions should be made to the legislation on electoral participation in order for it to comply with international standards.

65. Denial of the right to political participation, in addition to being a violation of international standards, has added significance for internally displaced persons, since the ability to participate in public and governmental affairs provides opportunities to influence and seek to ameliorate their situation. In the words of one local NGO, the legislation restricting the participation of internally displaced persons in elections "prevents internally displaced communities from putting their social and economic problems high on the agenda of politicians".[32] Given that the responsibility for implementation of policies for the displaced is largely decentralized, preventing internally displaced persons from participating in local elections and in the election of regional representatives to the national Parliament is not without consequence: it constrains the ability of the internally displaced to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

66. In situations, as in Georgia, of protracted displacement, giving internally displaced persons a stake in their host community becomes particularly pertinent. As one representative of internally displaced persons noted, the regulations restricting the participation of the displaced in local and regional elections is "not acceptable especially as we have been here not for only a few days but several years and yet we're made to feel like second-class citizens". The governor of one region seemed to suggest as much when pointing out that although soldiers stationed in a region other than that where they are officially registered have the right to vote in local elections after two years in the region, internally displaced persons continue to be denied this right even after residing in the region for upwards of seven to nine years.

67. It was also suggested that the issue of political participation by the displaced has been manipulated by political forces bent on the return of the population and regain of territorial control over Abkhazia. Specifically, it was widely alleged that they have pressured internally displaced persons to refrain from demanding their right to vote by suggesting that in so doing the displaced will somehow lose their right to return. It thus is important not only to amend the electoral law but also to counter this misinformation by explaining to internally displaced persons that exercising their right to full political participation in the areas where they currently reside in no way negates their right to return.

68. Moreover, the representatives from Abkhazia, whose mandates continue to be extended indefinitely, also have an interest in discouraging internally displaced persons from voting in order to maintain their own positions. Their legitimacy, however, is beginning to be questioned by internally displaced persons. However, because the displaced often depend upon the parallel system of services provided by the Government in Exile, they may feel compelled to refrain from openly expressing discontent with the current arrangement and demanding their right to vote for local and regional representatives. The reality is thus much more complex than the suggestion that internally displaced persons are simply apathetic in pressing for their right to full political participation.

69. Local NGOs pointed out that they had proposed that internally displaced persons at least be able to elect new representatives, but that the Government had refused. The most appropriate corrective measure, however, would be for the legislation on electoral participation to be revised to enable internally displaced persons to participate in the election of local and regional representatives for the areas in which they currently reside. As noted above, a number of senior government officials at the national and regional level conceded that the current policy on political participation by the displaced required reform.

F. Mental health

70. In the light of the conditions of the internally displaced, as briefly highlighted above, it is not surprising that mental health concerns also arise. Indeed, they are acute and thus deserve special attention. The traumatic experience of displacement and the conditions of conflict and serious human rights violations in which it occurred, the overcrowding in the collective centres, the dramatic change in lifestyle and living standards associated with displacement (especially for persons from Abkhazia, which was one of the most prosperous regions of Georgia), the sense of dependency created by limited ability to lead productive lives, the years on end of uncertainty concerning their future and their perception of themselves as second-class citizens pose tremendous challenges to the mental health of internally displaced persons. Local NGOs, who have the most direct contact with the displaced, often mentioned psychosocial needs as among their primary concerns regarding the internally displaced. The detrimental effect that the protracted displacement has had on children was noted as being of particular concern.

71. Some patterns have emerged in the way that the various strains on mental health associated with internal displacement manifest themselves. The Save the Children Fund (SCF) survey found a significantly higher rate of depression among internally displaced persons in communal facilities compared to those living in private accommodation. Older persons tended to show the highest levels of depression, followed by young people. Local NGOs reported that

problems of mental health were noticeably exacerbated after the events of May 1998 which displaced anew many people who had returned and severely dashed the hopes of those preparing to return imminently.

72. Psychosocial problems were said to deeply affect internally displaced persons and their attitudes. As noted earlier, there is among internally displaced residents residing in communal centres a formidable psychological barrier to relocating to better shelter conditions, for fear that this move would somehow signal relinquishing aspirations of return. Mental health problems also have an impact upon the family unit: the SCF survey found the proportion of divorced persons to be twice as high among internally displaced persons as among the local population.

73. The prevalence of mental health problems among the internally displaced and the impact that these have on the pursuit of possibilities to improve their living conditions and on the preservation of the family unit calls for comprehensive programmes addressing psychosocial needs. To be sure, a number of such initiatives already exist. For example, an important focus on addressing the psychosocial needs of internally displaced children is provided through the UNICEF programme for training professionals to address the psychosocial needs of children, as well as through the community-based programming run by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in cooperation with local NGOs. However, it was suggested that the number of programmes in place is still insufficient to address the magnitude of needs: additional such assistance is required.

74. It was also noted that programmes have tended to be concentrated in particular regions, especially in western Georgia. For instance, it was reported that 86 per cent of internally displaced persons in Imereti suffer from psychosocial trauma but that programmes were sorely lacking, especially compared to the availability of such services in Samegrelo. Indeed, this discrepancy frequently was noted, and not simply in relation to psychosocial services but to assistance to the displaced generally. To be sure, it is in Samegrelo that the greatest number of internally displaced persons is located; however there are also large concentrations in other regions. Moreover, greater attention needs to be given to the plight of internally displaced persons in South Ossetia who, though fewer in number than the large population of persons displaced from Abkhazia, also require national and international support. In short, a comprehensive approach to the problem is required. In addition to better ensuring equity in the response to the problems of internally displaced persons throughout Georgia, a more comprehensive countrywide approach could also help to diffuse the strong political and region-focused influences on the current response to the plight of internally displaced persons from particular regions.

III. PROSPECTS FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS

A. Return

75. The hope of returning to their home areas is one to which the internally displaced hold strongly. In Georgia, because return is associated with the issue of territorial control, it is a goal vigorously pursued also by the Government and other political forces. For the same reason, the de facto authorities are inclined to resist and restrict return.

76. This is particularly the case in Abkhazia where, despite statements by the local leadership that displaced ethnic Georgians are "welcome" to return as well as formal agreements for return, the reality on the ground is far different. The dramatic change in the demographic situation in Abkhazia resulting from the mass displacement of ethnic Georgians (who, it is recalled, constituted approximately 46 per cent of the pre-war population compared with 17 per cent ethnic Abkhaz, who now are in the majority) is undeniably a strong contributing factor to this attitude. In the same vein, the Abkhaz authorities have thus far limited discussion of return of ethnic Georgians strictly to the Gali district, where ethnic Georgians constituted more than 85 per cent of the pre-war population and which is contiguous to Georgia proper.

77. Even in the Gali district, however, it is difficult under the circumstances that have prevailed to date to consider durable return as a real possibility. Certainly, the events of May 1998, when the renewed outbreak of violence sent some 40,000 returnees fleeing anew, made this painfully clear. The lessons of this experience were not lost on the international community, which had invested over 2 million dollars in the Gali district to support return, only to have its efforts literally go up in flames with the burning of some 1,500 houses and 16 schools that had been reconstructed with international support. In the light of those events, the international community has been reluctant to relaunch programmes for promoting and supporting organized return in the absence of security guarantees for the population and the restoration of law and order in the areas of return.

78. Spontaneous return to the Gali district nonetheless does occur. Principally, it consists of older people returning "to be able to die in their homeland", as one person put it, or of some members of displaced families returning for short periods to check on their property and tend to their fields. The location of large numbers of internally displaced persons in western Georgia, just across the Inguri river from southern Gali, makes this type of short-term return possible. Although the fluid nature of return makes it difficult to determine the precise numbers of displaced persons who are back in Abkhazia at any given time, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), which is deployed in Abkhazia, specifically, and conducts patrols throughout the region, estimated that at the time of the mission, in May 2000, there were 35,000 to 45,000 non-Abkhaz in Gali. Of these, at least 10,000 were ethnic Georgians who had returned only for the cultivating season.

79. There is indeed a clear seasonal pattern to return, connected with the cultivating season and taking advantage of the fertile land in the Gali district. Hazelnuts are one of the more lucrative crops, drawing displaced persons back to Abkhazia for the harvest in the summer who then return to Georgia proper for the fall and winter months. It was noted that, in the absence of access to land or to adequate opportunities for employment and income-generation in Georgia proper, economic desperation is a driving force in the decision of the displaced to return, if only temporarily.

80. Another factor influencing the seasonal nature of return is the issue of education, in particular the language of instruction. According to the curriculum developed by the de facto Abkhaz "Ministry of Education", elementary education, from grades one to five, is provided only in Russian. This is true even in what are designated as Georgian language (as opposed to Russian or mixed Russian/Georgian) schools. Though instruction is provided in the Georgian language from grade six onwards, the prohibition on instruction in Georgian in elementary

education was pointed out as being a powerful deterrent to durable return of displaced ethnic Georgians as it threatens to impede the possibility for higher education elsewhere in Georgia. Though some language and cultural instruction is provided on the margins of the core material, Georgian history reportedly is not taught at all.

81. Principle 23 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement affirms that the authorities concerned should ensure that internally displaced persons receive education which respects their cultural identity, language and religion. Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes, in article 29.1 (c), that a child's education shall be directed, inter alia, to the development of "his or her own cultural identity, language and values". General reference was made to the content of these provisions when the Representative raised the issue of language of education policy with the de facto "President" of Abkhazia. The Secretary-General subsequently reported to the Security Council that there have been "signs that the Abkhaz authorities are taking a more pragmatic and flexible view on the use of the Georgian language in Gali district schools", pointing out that "[s]uch issues, relating to the education of children, are significant for the decision-making by displaced families considering a return to their former homes".[33]

82. It should be noted that the "seasonal" nature of return relates to the general timing of return as opposed to its duration. The "seasonal returnees" often go back and forth between Georgia proper and their home areas several times a season. International observers noted that there is regular traffic of internally displaced persons, especially across the bridge near Zugdidi that connects southern Gali with Georgia proper. In the case of persons whose homes are in southernmost Gali (it was said that some displaced persons could see their homes across the Inguri river), the actual period of return may be as little as a few hours. Typically, it is several days or weeks, with displaced persons then going back to Georgia proper, in particular once they have harvested produce to sell. Movements back to Georgia proper have also been noted to correspond to times when internally displaced persons are scheduled to receive humanitarian assistance, which in Abkhazia, where the activities of international humanitarian organizations are limited, is inadequate to meet the actual needs of the population there.[34]

83. Conditions of insecurity are the overriding obstacle to durable return. The Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council, just prior to the Representative's mission, described the precarious security environment on the ground, referring to a high level of criminal activity along and across the ceasefire line, tit-for-tat abductions, ambush attacks, kidnapping, robbery attempts involving killings, looting and harassment on ethnic grounds. He stressed that "providing a safe, secure and dignified return for all refugees and internally displaced persons who desire it is essential" and that the "insecure status of spontaneous returnees to the Gali district is a matter that must be addressed urgently".[35]

84. The Security Council, which regularly reviews the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, has repeatedly affirmed the imprescriptible right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return in safety and dignity to their previous places of permanent residence. A number of international and regional mechanisms deployed to the region have expressed responsibilities to assist in creating the conditions conducive to return. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), consisting of unarmed military observers charged primarily with monitoring and verifying implementation of a 1994 ceasefire agreement, is, "by its presence in

the area, to contribute to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons". UNOMIG explained that it does so primarily through regular patrols throughout the region, meeting with community leaders and reporting violations to local law enforcement officials for response. UNOMIG also used to maintain team bases in a number of outlying villages. However, the deterioration in the security condition led to the termination of semi-permanent presence in isolated areas. As a result, its patrolling activities now are limited to pre-planned visits in daylight hours. Local and international NGOs in Abkhazia both noted that it would be useful for UNOMIG to undertake patrols in lower Gali more frequently.

85. The Commonwealth of Independent States Peacekeeping Force (CISPKF), composed of Russian troops, with which UNOMIG is to cooperate in observing the ceasefire, was also established with the expectation that "its presence should promote the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, especially to the Gali district".[36] The mandate of CISPKF refers to "facilitating the return to their former places of permanent residence, in conditions of safety and dignity, of persons who left the conflict zone and the implementation of other provisions of the Quadripartite Agreement on the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons of 4 April 1994" and "ensuring compliance with the norms of international law and human rights". The passivity of CISPKF in the face of physical attacks against returning internally displaced persons, however, has been a cause for concern in the past.[37] Although the Representative did not have the opportunity to meet with officials of CISPKF to discuss how the Force presently carries out its protection functions, UNOMIG and other United Nations officials pointed out that CISPKF is currently playing a crucial role in combating the widespread criminality and lawlessness which is a main source of violence in the Gali district.

86. The United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia (HROAG) established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1077 (1996) as a component of UNOMIG in cooperation with OSCE is also expressly mandated to contribute to the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Relevant in this regard is the monitoring by HROAG of the human rights situation in the region, bringing cases of violations to the attention of the de facto authorities. Many of the cases raised were reported to relate to property rights, in particular to the restitution of homes and property of the displaced, which may be occupied by militia, and to harassment on ethnic grounds.

87. Though a number of international and regional mechanisms thus have specific mandates to support the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons to Abkhazia, primary responsibility for the creation of the necessary security conditions for return of course rests with the authorities. The Abkhaz authorities with whom the Representative met readily acknowledged that they had certain obligations to ensure security and, in reference to the events of May 1998, that their armed forces had committed "a number of grave mistakes" in the past. They suggested that now the problem of insecurity stems not so much from politically motivated violence but, rather, is largely one of general lawlessness and criminality. Yet both at the central and local levels, the Abkhaz authorities have failed to take measures to address this situation of insecurity and thus bear responsibility for its persistence which, it must be said, appears to be in their interest in that it impedes the safe return of ethnic Georgians. It is incumbent upon the central and local Abkhaz authorities to establish law and order and, in particular, to address the issue of impunity, by investigating and responding to security incidents and prosecuting perpetrators.

88. The work of HROAG in providing human rights training to law enforcement officials makes a contribution to this end. The Human Rights Office has undertaken to facilitate preparation of an Abkhaz language version of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and to integrate it into its training programmes for law enforcement officials.

89. Both the Abkhaz authorities and international observers pointed out that, as well as the need for enhancement of the credibility of local Abkhaz authorities in protecting the rights of all persons without discrimination, there is also a need for the Government of Georgia to control the infiltration of partisans and other armed groups into the security zone (established in accordance with the ceasefire agreement and covering an area, from southern Gali across into Georgia proper, where no armed groups are to operate), where their presence risks provoking clashes in which returnee communities are caught up, as was the case in May 1998. Among the agreed conditions for Georgia's accession to the Council of Europe is for the Government to "do everything in its power to put a stop to the activities of all irregular armed groups in the conflict zone".[38]

90. The presence of landmines is another significant security threat that must be addressed before return can occur in conditions of safety. There is a particularly high concentration of landmines along the Abkhazia bank of the Inguri river, where new mines reportedly continue to be laid by Abkhaz forces to deter ethnic Georgians from returning, and in Ochamchira and Tkvartcheli, where there are an estimated 27,000 landmines. Critical work in the area of mine action is being undertaken in Abkhazia by the Hazardous Areas Life-Support Organization (HALO) Trust, which in 1999 established the Abkhazia Mine Action Centre to supervise and coordinate all action in this area. One of the first tasks of the Centre was to undertake a survey and map the minefields throughout Abkhazia and to assess the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of mine laying.[39] The Centre also runs mine awareness programmes with the support of UNICEF, which are primarily aimed at schoolchildren. Minefield marking, involving the posting of danger signs, has been occurring in parallel. Demining is actively being carried out by the HALO Trust, which by March 2000 had cleared 415,258 square metres of mine contaminated land, including clearing over 2,500 landmines from the area near the ceasefire line along the Inguri river. Given the magnitude of the problem, significant additional support for demining is required.

91. Promoting peaceful coexistence among communities torn apart by ethnic conflict is another essential ingredient to safe and dignified return. The brutality of the conflict and the concomitant displacement inevitably has engendered great bitterness and deep mistrust among affected communities. This phenomenon of course, is not unique to the ethnic conflicts in Georgia. But the challenges of overcoming this bitterness and distrust are considerable, especially given the cultural tradition of vendetta that historically has existed in the region and apparently still is strong today; the de facto Abkhaz "President" spoke of a "different mentality" in the Caucasus: "Here, we cannot forget. When you insult someone physically you have to pay with blood." More encouragingly, a number of local NGOs, in both Abkhazia and Georgia proper, suggested that this sentiment was not so strong among the communities affected by the conflict that it could not be overcome. To further this process, they stressed the need for more concerted efforts to promote dialogue and establish links between the civilian population on the two sides of the conflict.

92. Aside from the experiences suffered during the conflict, the manner in which post-conflict humanitarian programmes are, or are perceived to be, carried out risks becoming a source of further tension between returnees and the local population. It was noted already that the local population in Abkhazia harbours resentment towards potential returnees on the basis that the internally displaced ethnic Georgians appear to have received greater international humanitarian assistance than populations, also in need, in Abkhazia where much of the infrastructure was destroyed during the conflict and the once thriving economy effectively is in ruins. Following a peace agreement, a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programme that addresses the particular needs of returnees and the local population will be required as an essential component of a durable peace.

93. Indeed, the conditions of insecurity stemming from the lawlessness and criminality, as well as the presence of landmines which pose severe threats to the physical security of returning internally displaced persons, also greatly constrain international humanitarian agencies from engaging in activities in the area. At the time of the mission, reportedly only five international humanitarian NGOs had a presence in the region. The pressures that these few organizations faced, both in terms of the magnitude of humanitarian needs to be met and of the security risks they must take in attempting to respond to them are immense. One international NGO operating in Abkhazia reported having received threats against having any association with ethnic Georgians, including simply for the leasing of property. The kidnapping of ICRC officials in Gali district this past summer underscores that the dangers that humanitarian workers face in assisting the returnee and other populations in Abkhazia are very real. The local authorities must take concrete measures to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. Their doing so surely should be a prerequisite for the establishment in Gali district, as is currently being explored, of a branch of the Human Rights Office to monitor human rights in this area of return.

94. In parallel to these measures, a peaceful settlement to the conflict must of course continue to be pursued and provisions sought supporting the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Part of the current phase in the Geneva-based peace process led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia is a component seeking agreement among the parties on a protocol, to form part of an eventual peace agreement, concerning the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The continued commitment of the parties to this process and of the international community to support it remains essential.

95. Meanwhile, for persons displaced by the Georgian-Osset conflict, who had already been displaced for nearly 10 years at the time of the Representative's mission, the pace of return has been extremely slow. UNHCR reported that between 1997 and 1999, only 730 families of internally displaced persons (with an average of five persons in each family) had returned. The overwhelming majority of this return movement involved persons internally displaced within South Ossetia (531 families). The bulk of the remainder involved returns of internally displaced persons to South Ossetia from Georgia proper (183 families). Reverse movements of return from South Ossetia to Georgia proper were negligible: reportedly only two families in 1998 and one in 1999. Within Georgia proper, another 13 internally displaced families have returned to their places of origin.

96. Although the Government of Georgia and the South Ossetian authorities have committed themselves to facilitating return, in practice a number of obstacles exist which impede progress towards this end.

97. With respect to security conditions, though active hostilities have long since ended and the ceasefire continues to hold, security incidents of a criminal nature pose risks to returnees, the local population and international personnel. Ethnically targeted incidents of harassment and violence were reported and are a particular risk in ethnically mixed villages, to which return has begun. The presence of UNHCR in the region (since 1997) was widely regarded, by returnee communities, the local population, the authorities and international personnel alike, as having made a major contribution to the security of returnees and the population at large, as well as to a general climate of reconciliation and confidence-building. A particularly important aspect of the UNHCR protective presence has been the regular patrols undertaken throughout the region by its Mobile Team Unit, which monitors protection conditions, investigates and mediates security and other incidents or problems suffered by returnees and collects information on conditions in areas of return, which is then shared with persons contemplating return. Especially now that return to ethnically mixed communities has begun, the contribution that these patrols make to supporting a stable security environment for returnees and peaceful coexistence among ethnic communities divided by the conflict is critical. In addition, there is also a need for the local authorities to take measures to restore law and order so as to address the problems of criminality and lawlessness which prevail.

98. In addition to protection of physical security, repair and restitution of property is another prerequisite for return. Support for the repair or reconstruction of war-damaged shelter is the other main component of the UNHCR programme in the region. More than a thousand shelters for returning refugees and internally displaced persons as well as other vulnerable families, have been repaired or rehabilitated since 1997.

99. The mission had the opportunity to visit a housing site in Tbet, outside of Tskhinvali, where basic housing had been built to replace homes destroyed during the conflict. The delegation met with two men who had been in collective centres in South Ossetia for over seven years. One of the men was not originally from South Ossetia but had decided to resettle there as the killing of members of his family made him feel it would be unsafe for him to return to his home area in Georgia proper. Both men noted with concern that many people from Georgia proper remained in collective centres in South Ossetia and wanted to return to their homes or needed assistance to resettle in South Ossetia.

100. A major obstacle to the return of ethnic Osset internally displaced persons in South Ossetia and refugees in North Ossetia to the areas of their pre-war residence in Georgia proper is the issue of property restitution. Local officials in Georgia proper reportedly have resisted removing illegal squatters, sometimes internally displaced persons themselves, from the homes of ethnic Ossets. Furthermore, it is reported that legal claims by returnees to their homes and property are usually denied and even when they are successful in obtaining a judicial eviction order, it is frequently not implemented by local officials.[40]

101. UNHCR and its partners provide legal and social counselling to affected families. Above all, however, legislative reform is required. The introduction of legislative and administrative

measures to permit the restitution of ownership and tenancy rights or the payment of compensation for property lost by people forced to abandon their homes during both the Abkhaz and Georgian-Osset conflicts is among the conditions to be fulfilled by the Government of Georgia upon the accession of Georgia to the Council of Europe.[41] UNHCR, together with the Council of Europe and the OSCE, has commissioned an independent expert to comment on the draft legislation prepared by the Government. Analysis of the extent to which this and other legislation relevant to the needs of internally displaced persons in Georgia accords with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is currently being carried out by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, with the support of the Brookings Institution project on internal displacement and OSCE/ODIHR.

102. Though the number of returns to South Ossetia is, as noted above, much greater than to Georgia proper, it must be said that, for many returnees to South Ossetia, return is only semi-permanent. As an indication of the semi-permanent nature of return, it was estimated that about 50 per cent of rehabilitated houses in the region are unoccupied for a significant part of the year, usually during the winter months outside of the cultivating season and when the weather is warmer in other parts of Georgia. The poor economic situation in the region relative to that in Georgia proper and North Ossetia is the primary factor for this seasonal population movement. In general, and certainly with respect to those who remain permanently, most of the returnees coming from outside of South Ossetia are pensioners and elderly persons, whereas displaced persons of working age remain in Georgia proper or North Ossetia, where economic and employment opportunities, though still limited, are comparatively better (it was suggested that the living standard in South Ossetia is about half of what it is elsewhere in Georgia). UNHCR has observed that more sustainable return has occurred since it began providing returnees with agricultural inputs.

103. There is also a need to support the general economic development of the region. Though Tskhinvali was said to have previously been an industrial centre, there was little evidence of this as a result of the destruction of infrastructure and industry that had resulted from the war. To be sure, reconstruction has begun: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for instance, noted that it had invested over 2 million dollars in development projects over the past two years, especially in infrastructure. However, UNDP-funded development projects in the region were scheduled to end and there is no expectation of further funding in the future. Sustained reconstruction and development assistance is required. The delegation's chance encounter with a delegation of parliamentarians and business leaders from a donor country, who had come to dialogue with the authorities on the issue of development investment in the region, was a hopeful sign.

104. Finally, it cannot be ignored that the ethnic lines along which the conflict and concomitant displacement occurred continue to influence the possibilities for return, not only in terms of pace, but also the place where it occurs. The record, as noted above, of authorities in Georgia proper on issues of property restitution or compensation for displaced Ossets suggests that ethnic discrimination remains strong. Meanwhile, it has been suggested that the South Ossetian leadership had blocked attempts by ethnic Georgian internally displaced persons to return, while encouraging Osset refugees in North Ossetia to resettle in South Ossetia rather than return to their pre-war homes in areas under the control of the Government of Georgia,[42] with a view to creating an ethnically homogenous state.

B. Alternatives to return

105. While the right of displaced persons to return to their previous areas of permanent residence must be ensured, it is also imperative that return not be viewed as the only possible durable solution for the displaced, who also have a right to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Although government policy, especially with regard to ethnic Georgians displaced from Abkhazia, appears to have been powerfully guided by the political priority placed on return of the displaced, resettlement in other parts of the country also must be supported for those internally displaced persons who desire it. The Guiding Principles, to which Georgian government officials responded so positively, affirm that the authorities have a duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes or places of habitual residence or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country.

106. Already, and despite the overriding emphasis on return, it is beginning to be recognized that certain internally displaced persons are unlikely to want to return, out of fear for their safety. The case, noted above, of the Osset man who had opted to resettle in South Ossetia rather than return to his previous residence in government-controlled Georgia, where he feared his safety could not be guaranteed, is one example. Persons who participated in the hostilities, or have relatives who did, consider themselves to be at particular risk of reprisals should they return and thus are likely to prefer resettlement.

107. An IRC pilot project is providing shelter construction assistance (roofing material, paint, windows, etc.) to some 30 families displaced from Abkhazia who have indicated that they will not return. An additional criterion for participation in the programme is that the prospective beneficiaries own land - a condition which, as detailed above, requires registering as a permanent resident in the area concerned and, under existing legislation, losing one's status as an internally displaced person and the benefits that this entails.

IV. A NEW APPROACH

108. As safe and dignified return is not an immediate possibility for the overwhelming majority of Georgia's internally displaced persons, it is imperative to improve their conditions in the interim so as to ensure not only that their basic needs are met but that they have the possibility to become self-reliant. As highlighted above, the greatest needs are: decent living conditions, access to cultivable land, opportunities for employment, access to credit, equal access to health, education and other public services, psychosocial services, and the ability to exercise their full rights as citizens to political participation, including in local and regional-level elections.

109. To be sure, there exists a certain solidarity between the Government and the internally displaced, at least the ethnic Georgians who constitute the majority of the displaced, which can be attributed in particular to shared ethnic kinship. Accordingly, and unlike in many cases of internal displacement, the displaced are not associated with the "enemy", nor are they subject to attacks on their physical security on that basis. The Government readily acknowledged the problem of internal displacement and invited the international community to assist it in meeting the emergency needs of the displaced.

110. Years on, the Government continues to give emphasis to the plight of the internally displaced. The Minister for Refugees and Accommodation, who acts as the government focal point for issues of internal displacement, pointed out that 15 per cent of the State budget is devoted to providing internally displaced persons with assistance to meet their basic needs.[43] And yet, given the current conditions of deprivation in which the displaced find themselves and the delays of months on end in the payment of their subsidy, questions arise as to the diversion of funds. It was difficult, for instance, to obtain a clear answer to the question whether all funds for displaced persons from Abkhazia were channelled through the Abkhaz Government in Exile, which, in addition to describing the humanitarian activities that it undertakes through the system of parallel structures, also informed the mission delegation in considerable detail of the defence capabilities that it maintains.

111. Moreover, years now having passed since the emergency phase of the two displacement crises, there is a need for the national response to go beyond simply providing humanitarian assistance to initiating the critical transition from relief to development. However, efforts to enable the internally displaced to become self-reliant and socially and economically integrated have tended to be strongly resisted by the Government, for fear of undermining the imperative of return and the goal of regaining territorial control that it represents. This policy has, as the Secretary-General has reported to the Security Council, left the internally displaced "in a precarious position, in effect locking them out of the benefits that could accrue to them from participation in longer-term development activities".[44] In this regard, the Representative found certain parallels between the plight of the internally displaced in Georgia and the situation of the internally displaced in Azerbaijan.[45]

112. Significantly, the similarities between the two situations also now extend to the adoption by the Governments concerned of more constructive and humane approaches to the plight of the internally displaced. In Georgia, this policy shift has been described as the "New Approach" to internally displaced persons. Developed by the Government, UNDP, UNHCR, the World Bank and OCHA, the New Approach reaffirms the right of all displaced persons to return to their home in conditions of safety and dignity, while recognizing the need, in the absence of those conditions, to enable internally displaced persons to realize their full rights as citizens and to resume productive lives. In this latter connection, the New Approach seeks to effect a humane transition from humanitarian assistance to more sustainable development, that is, to close what has been dubbed the "relief to reintegration gap".

113. It is also expected that, by enabling internally displaced persons to become, in the words of one government official, "agents for development", the country as a whole will benefit, while internally displaced persons will become better prepared for their eventual return. Indeed, the Minister for Refugees argued that the success of their return relies upon their active engagement in the economy and development of self-reliance in the interim. "Starving, hopeless people", he suggested, "will not have the wherewithal required to withstand difficult conditions upon return".

114. In an indication of the Government's commitment to the New Approach, the President established, by a decree of 31 January 2000, a presidential commission to facilitate, in cooperation with the international community, the development and implementation of specific initiatives to improve the situation of internally displaced persons. The Presidential

Commission, for which the State Minister acts as Chair, is comprised of 20 senior government officials, including the Minister for Refugees and Housing, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Food and Agriculture and the Deputy Minister of Justice. Four working groups charged with ensuring application of the New Approach in the sectoral areas of shelter, income-generation, access to social services and community development are to be assisted by technical experts, including many from internally displaced communities.

115. The creation of the Commission is a welcome step, especially in the light of the emphasis placed by international agencies and donor Governments on the importance of having a coordinating mechanism within the Government on the issue of internal displacement. That the Presidential Commission had not yet held its first meeting by the time of the mission in May was thus a serious concern, and one raised by the Representative with Governmental authorities at the highest level. For the resources required for the success of the New Approach will only be forthcoming from the international community if the Government clearly demonstrates that the issue of internal displacement and the New Approach are a national priority. It was thus most encouraging to learn subsequent to the mission that the Commission had begun to meet and assume its functions.

116. To support the New Approach in operational terms, a self-reliance pilot fund called the Georgia Self-Reliance Fund (GSRF) will provide grants ranging from $25,000 to $100,000 for projects in line with the New Approach. Initiatives supporting internally displaced persons in gaining access to decent housing, land, vocational training, employment, credit and information about their rights and entitlements are of particular interest, but innovative programmes supporting the self-reliance of internally displaced persons as well as their host families and communities will also be considered. The emphasis of the Fund is to be on supporting "hands-on" projects that are designed to create concrete benefits for internally displaced persons and actively involve them in the projects' planning and execution. A gender component, currently not included in the criteria for project funding, should be introduced so as to ensure that projects take into account and address the particular needs of internally displaced women and involve them in the planning and implementation.

117. Since the mission, it has been most encouraging to learn that the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the donor community have made preliminary pledges of $1 million to the Fund, enabling the release in early October of $300,000 for immediate use and the solicitation of GSRF grant proposals. At the time of submission of this report, the selection of the first round of projects was being finalized, with a number of projects set to begin implementation in early 2001. On the basis of the experience in the initial test phase of the New Approach, a more comprehensive two to three year multi-million dollar programme will be developed over the course of 2001.

118. To ensure the development of projects that target the needs of the internally displaced, a key component of the New Approach programme is a comprehensive assessment of the conditions and difficulties of internally displaced persons. A series of studies have been commissioned to assess and address the issues of shelter, employment and income generation, access to social services, the law as it relates to internally displaced persons and issues of community development.

119. In addition, the IFRC is conducting a detailed survey of displaced and non-displaced households to gain a better understanding of their different needs. The assessment will thus also be important in determining the extent to which there exist differences in vulnerability between internally displaced persons and the local population, as well as within the internally displaced population. In Georgia, the Representative frequently came across an impression, in particular within the international community, that internally displaced persons are a privileged group compared with the general population and thus that special programmes for them were unwarranted and would only exacerbate these differences. The findings of the mission challenge this view.

120. To be sure, much of the general population of Georgia is experiencing economic hardship and among them there are many particularly vulnerable persons who require special assistance. Internally displaced persons, simply as a result of being displaced, inevitably face additional disadvantages, including loss of home and property and thus a higher debt burden, possible death or injury of family members, separation of families and dislocation of communities. In the words of one local newspaper: "Take the problems of the average Georgian, then take away their home and social connections."[46] The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Marco Borsotti, has referred to the "unique needs" of internally displaced persons, who are "vulnerable by virtue of their displacement experience, and as such should have access to a wide range of services subsidized by the Government, regardless of objective measures of vulnerability".[47]

121. At the same time, it is true that some internally displaced persons are more economically vulnerable than others. As noted above, there are certain entitlements unique to internally displaced persons, such as the monthly stipend of 12 Georgian lari, to which they are all entitled on the basis of being internally displaced, regardless of their economic situation and need. One senior United Nations official recounted the story of internally displaced persons "driving up in Mercedes to collect their monthly allowance". And yet, to a query as to the percentage of the internally displaced population represented by this example, the response was that the number of internally displaced persons who clearly did not need the allowance was actually very low, while for most internally displaced persons the assistance provided was not enough. Moreover, it must be recalled that benefits, such as the monthly allowance, for the internally displaced that are provided for in law are often not provided in practice.

122. Further challenging the perception that internally displaced persons are economically privileged compared with the general population are the findings of the SCF survey (referred to several times in section II) that there are no differences - positive or negative - between internally displaced persons and the local population in terms of monetized income. However, the survey did find sharp discrepancies, placing the internally displaced at significant disadvantage, in terms of non-monetized income, especially as a result of lack of access to land. Other bases for comparison, for instance the issues of housing space, incidence of illness within the family and likelihood of owning a small business, led to a similar conclusion.

123. In addition, and regardless of their economic situation, internally displaced persons are deprived of certain rights enjoyed by the local population. These include the right to own land and the right to vote for local and regional elected officials. In some cases, they may also be denied the right to have access to regular educational and health facilities. Measures must be taken to end such discriminatory practices.

124. The assessments to be undertaken in conjunction with the New Approach will be important in establishing what the actual conditions and needs of internally displaced persons are and, on this basis, targeting efforts to address their needs, as well as those of vulnerable persons in the general population.

125. It will be important for the assessment and the New Approach programming initiatives to be comprehensive not only in terms of being community-based but also country-wide. The overwhelming focus by the Government, as well as the international community, has been on the plight of the internally displaced from Abkhazia. To be sure, this group constitutes the overwhelming majority of internally displaced persons in Georgia. However, there is also still a sizeable number of internally displaced persons uprooted by the conflict concerning South Ossetia who remain in need of attention and assistance. Even the focus on internally displaced persons from Abkhazia has been somewhat narrow, concentrated on particular regions, especially Samegrelo, with less emphasis on others which also host sizable internally displaced populations, as well as favouring urban centres over rural areas. The mission delegation had the sense that international programming for internally displaced persons has been ad hoc and characterized by a pick-and-choose approach, sponsoring projects in one area but not others, focusing on urban centres but not outlying regions, working with some local NGOs but not others. There is a need for a more comprehensive, coordinated and strategic response. The countrywide assessment of the conditions of internally displaced persons should highlight gaps in the response, including geographic pockets of particular need, and thus help to address any geographic or other imbalances.

126. It will also be important for the design and implementation of New Approach programmes to involve local NGOs and internally displaced communities. Guiding Principle 28. 2 calls for special efforts to be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration. Local NGOs have close contacts with internally displaced communities and are well placed to seek their views and, on this basis, to provide guidance in the selection and design of projects so as to ensure that these best target the needs of the internally displaced. They also suggested that they could play a valuable role in monitoring the implementation and impact of projects.

127. Further, there is a role for local NGOs to play in explaining the New Approach and its implication to internally displaced communities. In the light of the formidable psychological barrier among the displaced to relocation or even to improvement of their current living conditions, it is essential to explain clearly to them that any such improvement in no way negates their right to return to their pre-war place of residence. To counter possible misinformation to the contrary being propagated by political elements, it would be important for this awareness-raising work to be undertaken by NGOs. Local NGOs are particularly well suited to do so, given their close contacts and relationship with displaced communities.

128. In conclusion, the New Approach is an important and welcome initiative that requires support and active involvement at the local, national and international levels. Its emphasis on improving the current conditions of the internally displaced while continuing to advocate their right to return in safety and dignity is a most appropriate response to the challenges that arise in protracted situations of displacement, in particular that of ensuring a timely and humane

transition from relief to development. Indeed, the New Approach to the plight of internally displaced persons in Georgia should serve as a potential model, which could usefully be applied in other such situations, in particular in the region.

V. CONCLUSION

129. By way of conclusion, it can be said that the mission achieved its four stated objectives. The first two of these were to study the situation of internal displacement in Georgia and the current conditions of the internally displaced, and to understand the constraints impeding durable solutions for the displaced. The visits to collective centres where many of the displaced currently reside, as well as to the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from where they originate, proved particularly informative in this regard. It must be said that the findings of the mission challenge the impression frequently encountered, in particular in the international community, that internally displaced persons in Georgia are a privileged group and thus that special programmes for them are unwarranted. The population of Georgia as a whole faces socioeconomic difficulties, but the displaced have additional disadvantages which need to be acknowledged and addressed. In protracted situations of displacement, the particular vulnerabilities of the displaced risk being forgotten. In Georgia, neither the vulnerabilities of the displaced nor the factors leaving them in conditions of vulnerability should continue to be overlooked. The third objective of the mission, that of exploring, through dialogue with the Government and other authorities, international agencies, NGOs, civil society and internally displaced persons themselves, possibilities for overcoming these constraints proved instrumental in meeting the fourth objective, that of formulating a number of recommendations towards ensuring more effective responses.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

130. The Commission on Human Rights, as well as the General Assembly, has invited Governments of countries to which the Representative has undertaken an official mission to give due consideration to his recommendations and suggestions and to make available information on measures taken thereon. The Representative looks forward to further cooperation with all those involved in implementing the following recommendations, intended for the Government of Georgia, other authorities, the international community and local NGOs, towards enhancing response to the plight of internally displaced persons in Georgia.

(i) **Acknowledge the vulnerability and special needs of the internally displaced and their rights to protection, assistance, reintegration and development aid.** The findings of the Representative's mission challenge the prevailing impression that internally displaced persons in Georgia are a privileged group, by identifying a number of particular problems and disadvantages that the face. International organizations, NGOs and government authorities should make known their special needs and take steps to address them.

(ii) **Disseminate and promote the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, especially in local languages.** Dissemination of the Principles to internally displaced persons is critical, as a means of countering the politically motivated misinformation concerning their rights that is being propagated. Translation of

the Principles into local languages, in particular Abkhaz and Osset, would be important in this regard. The Principles also should be promoted among the authorities, agencies and NGOs and among local communities, so as to sensitize the population at large to the particular plight of internally displaced persons.

(iii) **The Government should design national policies and legislation, and international and local programmes in accordance with the Guiding Principles**. The Government's positive response to the Principles should be reflected in national legislation and policy. Among the initiatives which should facilitate this is the study of Georgian legislation relating to internally displaced persons to be undertaken by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, with the support of the Brookings Institution project on internal displacement and OSCE/ODIHR

(iv) **The Government should ensure the full rights of internally displaced persons as citizens**. Though this recommendation is implicit in the previous recommendation, it merits express statement and the undertaking of specific measures, in particular with regard to equitable access to public services such as education and health, access to land, opportunities for income-generation and the right of internally displaced persons to participate fully in the civil and political decision-making processes that affect their lives. Legislation governing land ownership and entitlement to vote in elections needs to be revised so as to respect the rights of the internally displaced. The Government is encouraged to seek assistance from OHCHR, in the context of its technical cooperation and advisory services programme, to support initiatives to promote and protect the rights of internally displaced persons.

(v) **Improve the living conditions of displaced persons.** The Government, the international community and civil society should work together to improve the current living conditions of the displaced, especially those in collective centres. In particular, efforts should be made to encourage the relocation of internally displaced persons, especially those living in hospitals and dilapidated hotels, so that their lives and those of their children can be improved.

(vi) **The Government should ensure payment of the stipend to which internally displaced persons are entitled.** The 12 lari monthly stipend to which internally displaced persons are entitled is certainly not sufficient for their survival but it is critical. Moreover, it is provided for by law. At the time of the mission, internally displaced persons had not received this stipend for six months.

(vii) **Support comprehensive and countrywide efforts to improve the current conditions of internally displaced persons**. Too much of the humanitarian focus is on certain groups and areas, to the neglect of others. Support programmes, such as the New Approach, should seek to become more comprehensive, encompassing internally displaced persons from the Georgian-Osset conflict, as well as those displaced by conflict in Abkhazia, and targeting rural as well as urban areas. In particular, they should be based on an

objective assessment of vulnerability, and there should be rapid disbursement of funds from the international community and prompt implementation of projects to improve the lives of the displaced, especially in terms of their living conditions, opportunities for income-generation and access to land.

(viii) **Given special attention to the particular needs of women and women-headed households.** Skills training, business development and credit support initiatives targeting internally displaced women are required, as is strengthened support for organizations of internally displaced women. Towards ensuring that projects undertaken as part of the New Approach address the particular needs of women and women headed-households, as well as involve women in the planning and implementation, a gender component should be introduced as criteria for funding by the Georgia Self-Reliance Fund.

(ix) **Support programmes to address psychosocial needs.** The high incidence of mental health problems among the internally displaced and the impact that these have on the pursuit of possibilities to improve their living conditions and on the preservation of the family unit call for comprehensive programmes addressing psychosocial needs, and paying special attention to those of internally displaced children.

(x) **Uphold the right of internally displaced persons to return in safety and dignity.** The emphasis in the New Approach on improving the current conditions of internally displaced persons must in no way be misconstrued as abandoning the right to return, which is imprescriptible and must continue to be advocated and actively pursued by the Government, local NGOs and civil society, and the international community.

(xi) **End obstructions to the right to return in safety and dignity.** The national and de facto authorities must take concrete measures to ensure respect of this right and create the conditions for its realization. The Abkhaz authorities in particular are called upon to cease the laying of mines as a deterrent to return, to support de-mining efforts in areas of return, to make concerted efforts to establish law and order in areas of return and to revise, in accordance with international standards, the language of instruction policy in Georgian schools, which also works to obstruct return. The Government of Georgia is called upon to ensure a fair and transparent process for property restitution or compensation and, together with the Government in Exile, to make concerted efforts to stem the incursion of armed partisan groups into the security zone established as part of the cease-fire agreement regarding the conflict in Abkhazia. The authorities in South Ossetia also are called upon to establish effective mechanisms of law and order and, in particular, to prevent ethnically motivated violence, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators when this does occur.

(xii) **Recognize the right of internally displaced persons to pursue alternatives to return, that is resettlement in another part of the country.** Given the politicization of the plight of internally displaced persons in Georgia, it is

essential to ensure that the overriding emphasis on return, which indeed appears to be the preferred option of many of the displaced, does not come at the expense of alternative durable solutions, specifically resettlement, to which internally displaced persons are also entitled.

(xiii) **Support those supporting the displaced.** This support must take a number of forms. Host families who have generously taken in internally displaced persons but may also be suffering poor socioeconomic conditions require support in shouldering this extra burden. Human rights and humanitarian personnel, local as well as international, must be able to operate with unrestricted access to populations in need and have their safety assured. Moreover, the important work of local NGOs with the internally displaced must be supported and strengthened, in particular outside of the capital and in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, especially as civil society is one of Georgia's greatest assets and NGOs can make an important contribution to depoliticizing the plight of the displaced. Special attention should be given to supporting the active involvement of local NGOs and civil society in the implementation of the New Approach.

(xiv) **Intensify efforts to resolve the conflicts.** While undertaking measures to improve the current conditions of the displaced, durable solutions to their plight of course require that the root causes of their displacement, which are inherently political in nature, be effectively addressed. Though conflict negotiation processes have been in place for both conflicts for several years now, there is a need for intensification by all parties of efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the conflicts causing displacement. The Government of the Russian Federation has a particularly important role to play in facilitating the resolution of both conflicts, especially that in Abkhazia.

(xv) **Advance planning for post-conflict reconstruction.** Following a peace agreement, a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programme that addresses the particular needs of returnees as well as of the local population will be required as an essential component of a durable peace. Advance planning for this by the Government and other authorities, in cooperation with the international community, is important for ensuring a smooth transition to peace, and to support the return and reintegration of displaced persons.

(xvi) **Support efforts promoting peaceful co-existence.** Even in the event of political agreements ending the conflicts, the legacy of bitterness left by the ethnic conflicts must also be addressed and overcome in order to ensure the safe and durable return and reintegration of displaced persons into their pre-war communities. A number of initiatives to this end have begun, but local NGOs, on both sides of the Abkhaz conflict in particular, noted the need for more concerted efforts to enable dialogue and establish other links between the civilian population caught up in the conflicts. The Government, de facto authorities and the international community should also invest in these grassroots peace-building initiatives.

Notes

[1] The Government cites the precise figure of 282,155 persons. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Georgia, Report on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Georgia, May 2000, p. 3. The U.S. Committee for Refugees, an authoritative source on figures of internally displaced populations worldwide, cites the approximate figure of 280,000. U.S. Committee for Refugees, World Refugee Survey, 2000 (Washington, D.C., Immigration and Refugee Services of America, 2000), p. 239.

[2] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, op. cit., p. 11.

[3] The role of Russia in the conflict is well documented. See, for instance, Thomas Goltz, "Letter from Eurasia: the hidden Russian hand", Foreign Policy, Issue 92 (Fall 1993), pp. 92-116; Human Rights Watch, Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict (New York, Human Rights Watch, 1995).

[4] See "Report of the Secretary-General's fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia" (S/26795, annex), 17 November 1993. See also Human Rights Watch, Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict, op. cit.; Amnesty International, Georgia: Alleged Human Rights Violations during the Conflict in Abkhazia (London, Amnesty International, 1993).

[5] See OSCE Istanbul Summit Declaration (SUM.DOC/2/99), 19 November 1999, para. 17. See also conclusions of the OSCE Lisbon Summit regarding the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, reproduced in the annex to Security Council document S/1997/57; and Budapest Decisions, chapter II, Regional issues, Georgia, in Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Budapest Document: Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era, 6 December 1994.

[6] Quadripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons, signed in Moscow on 4 April 1994 by the Abkhaz and Georgian sides, the Russian Federation and UNHCR. The text is reproduced in annex II to Security Council document S/1994/397.

[7] See Erin D. Mooney, "Internal displacement and the Conflict in Abkhazia", International Journal on Group Rights, vol. 3, No. 3, (1995/96), pp. 197-226, especially pp. 209-214. For a critique of UNHCR involvement in organized return under the Quadripartite Agreement, see Open Society Institute, Forced Migration: Repatriation in Georgia (New York, June 1995).

[8] For more details of the events and, in particular, of the response of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeepers and United Nations military observers in the area, see S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear and Stephen D. Shenfield, "Armed Conflict in Georgia: A case study in humanitarian action and peacekeeping", Occasional Paper No. 21 (Providence, Rhode Island. Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, 1996), pp. 54-55; and Mooney, op. cit., p. 222-233.

[9] "Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia" (S/1998/647), 14 July 1998, para. 13.

[10] Security Council resolution 1187 (1998) of 30 July 1998.

[11] See Helsinki Watch, Bloodshed in the Caucasus: Violations of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights in the Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict (New York, Human Rights Watch, 1992).

[12] See Erin D. Mooney, "Ingush displacement from North Ossetia: keeping it on the international agenda", International Journal of Refugee Law, vol. 7, No. 4, 1995, pp. 675-678; Human Rights Watch, The Ingush-Ossetian Conflict in the Prigorodnyi Region (New York, Human Rights Watch, 1996).

[13] Susie Mesure, "Slim hopes for IDPs", Georgia Today (12-18 May 2000).

[14] Save the Children Fund (SCF), Georgia Assistance Initiative Survey (February 2000), see www.assistancegeorgia.org.ge/survey

[15] International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Survey of Collective Centres Accommodating Internally Displaced Persons, 1999, (Tbilisi, IFRC, 2000), p. 4.

[16] "Georgian special police disperse displaced persons' protest", RFE/RL Newsline, vol. 4, no. 114, 13 June 2000.

[17] World Bank, Georgia - Poverty and Income Distribution, vol. I, Report No. 19348-GE (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 1999), paras. 1-2.

[18] Ibid., para. 12

[19] The legality of legislative provisions relating to registration and status of internally displaced persons is persuasively challenged in Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, "Monitoring of legal and actual status of internally displaced persons in Georgia", a paper supported by UNHCR (Tbilisi, 1999), pp. 26-27.

[20] Ibid., p. 20.

[21] World Bank, op.cit., para. 14.

[22] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Survey of the Living Conditions of the Population of Jvari, Samegrelo Region, Georgia (Tbilisi, IFRC, 2000), p. 20.

[23] Ibid., p. 22.

[24] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[25] G.F. Maberly, Iodine Deficiency in Georgia: Progress toward Elimination, Summary Report, Atlanta, The Program against Micronutrient Malnutrition, 1997.

[26] IFRC, op. cit., p. 37.

[27] Save the Children Fund survey, February 2000.

[28] IFRC, Nutritional Survey of IDP Children in Western Georgia, (Tbilisi, IFRC, 1998).

[29] Ibid., p. 26: also UNDP, Human Development Report: Georgia, 1998 (Tbilisi, 1998), p. 81,citing a survey conducted in 1996-1997 by the State Department of Statistics in Georgia.

[30] Simon Bagshaw, "Internally displaced persons and political participation: the OSCE region", Occasional Paper (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement, September 2000).

[31] "Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons; Compilation and analysis of legal norms (E/CN.4/1996/52/Add.2), paras. 48-65. See also Walter Kälin, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations, Studies in Transnational Legal Policy, No. 32 (Washington, D.C., American Society of International Law and Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement, 2000), pp. 6-7.

[32] United Nations Association of Georgia, press release, 16 May 2000.

[33] "Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia" (S/2000/697), 17 July 2000, para. 17.

[34] "Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia", (S/2000/345), 24 April 2000. para. 23.

[35] Ibid., paras. 14-20, 23, 25, 31.

[36] Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994, Protocol concerning the peacekeeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

[37] Mooney, "Internal Displacement and the Conflict in Abkhazia", op. cit., pp. 215-221; MacFarlane, Minear and Shenfield, op. cit., pp. 54-57.

[38] Opinion No. 209 (1999), "Georgia's application for membership of the Council of Europe", Extract from the Official Gazette of the Council of Europe (January 1999), para. 10 (v) (a).

[39] The HALO Trust and Abkhazia Mine Action Centre, Abkhazia Minefield Survey Report, Edition One (March 2000).

[40] United States Committee for Refugees (USCR), World Refugee Survey, 2000, p. 240.

[41] Official Gazette of the Council of Europe, op. cit., para. 10 (ii) (g).

[42] USCR, World Refugee Survey, 2000, p. 240. This point was also made by international observers met by the mission delegation.

[43] Mesure, op. cit.

[44] "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council", (S/2000/345), 24 April 2000, para. 24.

[45] See "Profiles in displacement: Azerbaijan, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons" (E/CN.4/1999/79/Add.1), 25 January 1999.

[46] Sam Belucci and Tamara Cherkezishvili, "Everyday Iveria", Georgia Today, 12-18 May 2000.

[47] Marco Borsotti, "IDPs and frozen conflicts: answering the challenge", Statement to the Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Segment panel discussion on internally displaced persons, New York, 19 July 2000.

Appendix

MAP OF GEORGIA AND REGION

Source: Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey, 1998

Note: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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